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Musical Criticism.—"The Huguenots."—Nationalities in Music. &c.

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Editor of *Dwight's Journal of Music*:

Sir,—It is so delightful to meet with so excellent a piece of criticism as that signed "Civis," published in last week's *Journal*, that I cannot refrain from indulging in the expression of the pleasure it has given sundry of your most constant readers in New York. Perhaps most persons judge of the excellence of criticism by its coincidence with their own views, and certainly the article in question most faithfully represents many of the sentiments of your present correspondent while listening to the "Huguenots," as recently given in this city. Some, perchance, might feel inclined to award a larger share of praise to Laborde, and even rather less to Poinot and Formes. Others, too, might differ with "Civis" regarding the libretto. George Sand's observation that "she did not care to go to the theatre to see Catholics and Protestants cut each other's throats, while a Jew made the music," contains not only wit but a fine sense of the true aim of public amusements. "The Huguenots" is as much a piece of *diablerie* as "Robert," and really seems intended as a burlesque upon Christianity in general. As brought out in New York, instead of producing the idea of the horror of warring Christians, it merely excited the risible faculties of many among the audience. This effect may be attributed to the *manner* of its production, but I am inclined to think there is a radical defect, not only in the subject, but also in the dramatic treatment of it. There are those, too, and they not among least learned and competent judges, who are of opinion that Meyerbeer's musical effects are rather addressed to the senses than to the heart and mind.

The sublime and the ridiculous lie so near together that even a man of most sensitive and discriminating intellect would find difficulty in presenting such a terribly cold-blooded tragedy as the *Massacre of St. Bartholomew* upon the operatic stage, without showing how inadequate the scenic means are to the representation of the ideas probably intended to be suggested. One versed in the heart of woman cannot help feeling shocked at the eagerness with which the widow of the gallant, high-minded Nevers rushes into second bonds; and we are also not informed of the source whence Marcel derives his right to the performance of marriage ceremonies; as far as the story tells us, he was not even a justice of the peace.

However, I will not weary you with individual views upon a subject open to much discussion, but will gladly embrace this opportunity of congratulating you upon your success in having established a *really independent* and most excellent journal of Art. Nothing but entire sincerity of purpose, and true love for music, could have sustained you through the many impediments you must have encountered in the beginning; and I

trust the circulation of your valuable paper is sufficiently wide to reward you for the labor you have expended upon it, as also for the wear and tear of brain and nerves that must attend the public contact of every delicately organized mind with a half-taught and unartistic world. Our people are not naturally very musical, but they have ear sufficient, and heart and mind enough to learn: the two latter qualities, however, predominating, their appreciation of what is great and good in the most ethereal of the arts must first be educated through the *literature* of that art; and, by its diffusion, you are nobly aiding in the good cause. Sensitiveness to lofty and hidden meanings, love of truth and hatred of humbug and affectation, are what you have ever striven to inculcate, and all true lovers of music and of our own broad land must bid you "God speed."

We, in America, with the blood of so many races coursing through our veins, stand upon high ground, whence we can impartially survey many nationalities, and select for our own edification and entertainment whatever we may judge to be intrinsically best. Nevertheless, there is danger lest fashion or exclusive cliques in our principal cities should succeed in introducing certain styles of music to the exclusion of other kinds equally good. What can be more absurd than parties for or against Italian or German music? Genius is universal, and although, of course, colored by nationality and individual character, must, when genuinely creative, appeal to civilized man in every clime. While we enjoy the delicious, long-phrased, flowing melodies of the Italian, and the more ponderous and intellectual harmonies of the German, let us not forget that there have been Italians equally intellectual and harmonic, and that, while a mere dilettante like myself would not dare to touch with praise or blame the great names of Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, the more modern Germans are too often profoundly obscure or insipidly flat. We must also remember that all music is not either German or Italian, but that there are other nationalities, whose primitive melodies, springing from the very heart of the people, are among the most beautiful ever created. Why have our pretty singing birds almost abandoned the beautiful airs of the Celtic race, the ballads of Scotland and Ireland, to devote themselves to apparently more difficult flights of song? Can it be that the love of ostentation and brilliant display, which has taken possession of our dwellings, has also invaded the still youthful realm of American Art? Or is it because it requires less real cultivation and command of the vocal organs to sing showily a few roudades, than to produce the long sustained notes, the light and shade of execution, and the clear articulation of words required by the ballad?

There is also the great Slavonic element in music, which has too long been overlooked, an element combining flowing melody with the most learned and profound harmonies, and adding thereto the simplicity, vigor, passion, and dra-

matic force of a race but recently aroused to a consciousness of the great part it may be called upon to play in the world's future. On the other side of the ocean, the political preponderance of the German in Slavonic countries has caused their beautiful and characteristic people's songs, as well as the great elaborated works of the race, to be ignored; but such surely need not be the case on this side the Atlantic, and it is the mission of independent journals, such as yours, to spread among the people the knowledge of all that is really good, let it come from where it may. Chopin and Tomaschek surely deserve to be as widely known, as highly esteemed, and as dearly loved as any other among the great musical names that have caught the world's ear; the first, as the "subtlest-souled psychologist," and the deepest and tenderest tone-picturer of modern days; and the last, as a giant, second only to Beethoven in all that rendered Beethoven truly great, and surpassing him in profound science, ever correct taste, and a matchless comprehension and mastery of form.*

With many apologies for this lengthy intrusion, and sincere wishes for a prosperous and happy New Year, I remain, Truly yours, L. D. P.

*This is indeed news to us! Pray, Mr. Zerrahn, Quintette Club, or somebody, give us a chance to hear a thing or two by Tomaschek. As to Chopin, of course, amen!—Ed.

John Field.

(From the Echo.)

(Concluded from page 323.)

"If we allow ourselves to be thoroughly imbued with the touching softness which is manifest in his compositions, just as it swayed his playing, we cannot avoid feeling perfectly convinced how useless it would be to attempt to copy him, or to abandon ourselves to the hope that we might successfully imitate his tender originality, which is characterized quite as much by the utmost simplicity of feeling as by the greatest diversity of form and ornament. If there is anything, the mystery of which we shall in vain strive to pierce, supposing nature has not given it as a distinguishing mark of our own disposition, it is the grace of simplicity and the charm of ingenuousness. We may possess these qualities naturally, but we can never acquire them. Field was naturally endowed with them, and, consequently, his compositions will always possess a charm, over which time has no power; his forms will never grow old, for they correspond exactly with his feelings, which do not belong to the domain of what is transient and rapidly fleeting, and which arises from the influence to which we are most immediately exposed, but to those pure emotions of the mind which possess an eternal charm for the human heart, because the latter always finds them unchanged with regard to the beauties of nature, and those tender sentiments which steal over it, in the spring of life, when the brilliant prism of the world of feeling is not yet clouded by the shadows of reflection. We must not, therefore, think of forming ourselves on so wonderful a model, for, without especial natural aptitude, we cannot achieve such effects, which can be attained only when they are not sought. It would be in vain for us to attempt subjecting the charm of their capriciousness to analysis. That capriciousness springs entirely from a mind like Field's. "For Field the invention of what was new was a relief from what existed, and variety and

diversity of form were a necessity, as is usually the case with all who are overflowing with any particular feeling. But, despite this elegance and capricious changeableness, his talent was free from all affectation; on the contrary, his fancy was distinguished for primitive simplicity, which takes a pleasure in finding an endless number of modes of representing the simple and happy harmony of a sentiment with which the heart is filled.

"What we now say, is intended to apply to the composer as well as the *virtuoso*. When he was writing, just as when he was playing, Field's sole aim was to obtain a clear insight into his own feelings, and it is impossible to fancy a more child-like indifference than his toward the public.

"When he went to Paris, he contented himself, in his concerts, with a table-formed instrument, the effect of which was necessarily far inferior to that which could have been produced by another more suited to the places in which attentive audiences assembled, and whom he charmed without intending or knowing it. The almost complete immovability of his hands, and his inexpressive look awoke no curiosity. His eye was not fixed on that of any one else, and his playing proceeded with clearness and fluency. His hands glided over the keys, while the notes grew up beneath them like a long track of pearly foam. It required no effort to discover that he had not so much at heart the satisfaction of any of his auditors as his own. His calmness bordered on apathy, and nothing could trouble him less than the impression he might produce on his audience. Neither in his bearing or the rhythm of his playing was there anything hard or jarring, to break the thread of his melodious dreaming, that spread around him a certain something full of precious fascination, which, by means of his melodies, and in a low voice, caressingly lisped a confession of the sweetest impressions and most charming surprises of the heart.

"Far from ever leaving him, this cool sedateness appeared, on the contrary, to obtain a greater and greater mastery over him the older he grew. Every noise, every movement became completely repulsive to him; he was fond of silence, and when he spoke he did so softly and slowly. Everything boisterous and noisy was opposed to his nature, and avoided by him. His playing, which was so tasteful and admirable, assumed the character of a *morbidzza*, the languor of which appeared to grow more striking every day.

"In order to avoid the least unnecessary motion, he invented for the practice, to which he daily devoted several hours to the end of his life, a plan that, unfortunately, seems to have fallen too much into oblivion at the present day. This plan consists in the player's placing a broad gold coin on the surface of the hand, and, in order to prevent it from falling, avoiding all violent movement when playing. This trait affords an excellent estimate of the calmness of his playing and his character. During the later years of his life, a feeling of complete indifference obtained possession of him, and ruled all his corporeal habits to such an extent, that even standing up or walking became a trouble to him. The light weight of a walking-stick was too much for the strength of his hand, unused to all kinds of exertion, and, if he let it fall while he was out, he remained, far want of the amount of energy necessary to pick it up himself, standing near it, and waited quietly until some one happened to pass that way and picked it up for him.

"Nearly the same was true of his reputation, about which he did not trouble himself in the least. He cared little about being known far and wide, and praised and celebrated by those who gave the tone to public opinion. For him, Art possessed no gratification save that which he found in giving himself up to it. He never troubled his head as to what place would be assigned him, what kind of name would follow him, what success his works would achieve, or how long they would last. He sang for himself; his own pleasure was the only gratification he required from his art. If he wrote anything, he did so in a kind of abstraction. Many of his works, unfortunately not very numerous, especially his

Concertos, contain passages full of originality, astonishing novelty of invention, and indisputable harmonic beauty; when, however, we study them, and imbue ourselves more thoroughly with their contents, we are tempted to believe that, when writing, just as when playing, he consulted merely his own fancy, creating without effort, inventing without exertion, elaborating with ease, and publishing without any ulterior views. How is everything changed now-a-days! But it is precisely to this absence of consideration of the effect that we are indebted for the first (so perfect) attempts to free pianoforte composition from the constraint imposed on it by the normal form, over which all pieces had to be regularly and faithfully stretched, and to endow it with the expression of feeling and a world of dreamy forms. Before his time, a composition was necessarily a Sonata, a Rondo, or something of that kind. Field was the first to introduce a class of composition which took its origin from none of the existing forms, and in which feeling and song held sole sway, free from the fetters and shackles of a form forcibly imposed on it. He paved the way for all subsequent productions, which appeared under the name of "Songs without words," "Impromptus," "Ballads, &c., and we may trace back to him the origin of those pieces intended to find utterance in notes for particular emotions and intense feeling. It was he who discovered this new field of action, so favorable to the development of natural qualities, distinguished more for tenderness than for lyrical dash.

"The name 'Nocturne' is well adapted to those pieces which Field took it into his head to designate so, for it immediately carries our thoughts from the present, to those hours when the soul, having escaped all the cares of day, and sunk back in itself, soars upwards to the regions of the starry firmament, where we see it, merry and bepinioned, like the Philomel of the ancients, floating about over the flowers and perfumes of nature, whose lover it is.

"The charm, which constantly attracts back again to these pure and simple effusions such persons as still retain some of their youthful impulses, is all the more irresistible now-a-days, the more we experience the necessity of recovering from the forced and far-fetched outbreaks of more violent and confused passions, peculiar to a considerable portion of the modern school. We have been fated to see, even under the name of 'Nocturne,' efforts as strange as they were astonishing offered us, instead of the modest and harmless tenderness which Field introduced in his compositions. One man of genius alone succeeded in breathing into this kind of composition, the greatest flexibility and fervor of which it was capable, without losing its sweetness and the vagueness of its pretensions.

"Striking all the chords of elegiac feeling, and dyeing his dreams in the dark tints of mourning for which Young found such painfully moving expression, Chopin gave us in his 'Nocturnes' harmony which becomes the source of our most inexpressible delights, but at the same time, of our most unquiet and passionate emotions. His flight is higher, although his passions are more deeply wounded, and his sweetness possesses a penetratingly painful effect, so little can it conceal his despondency. No one will ever be able to surpass, or—what in Art is the same thing—to equal the perfection of invention and form, which distinguish all the pieces he published under the name of 'Nocturnes.'

"They are more nearly allied to pain than those of Field, and therefore more significant. Their darkly gleaming poetry overpowers us more, but calms us less, and consequently causes us to feel happy at being again able to turn to those pearl-shells, which open, far from the storms of the monster ocean, on the banks of some stream murmuring under the shade of palm-trees, in an oasis whose joys make us forget the desert by which it is surrounded.

"The charm which I always found in these pieces, distinguished by so much melody, and such delicate harmony, extends back to the years of my youth. Long before I thought I should ever meet the author of them, I cradled myself

for hours in dreams full of many forms, which arose before my intoxicated soul, after I had been plunged by the music in a sweet stupor, similar to that caused by the agreeable vapor of rose tobacco, replacing, in a narghly full of jasmine perfume, the sharp and fragrant tombski; hallucinations without fever or convulsions, and rather full of impalpable pictures, gradually fading away, and the touching beauty of which changed, in a moment of ecstatic madness, emotion into passion. In these pieces are united, in the most charming manner, all the qualities which ever excited men to write or read idylls or eclogues. How often did I allow my eye and my thoughts to float over the name of that Madame Rosenkämpf, to whom the longest and most beautiful (the fourth nocturne) of these pieces is dedicated; how many confused and pleasing ideas were suggested to me by this same name of Rosenkämpf, which had been the motive of such a profoundly feeling, tenderly melancholy, and yet happy creation! Beauty of style is here united with grace of sentiment, and there is such softness in the ornamentation, so choice a selection in the modulations of the thought, that it appears as if nothing was noble, choice and blameless enough for the composer, when he wrote lines so pure.

"The first and fifth of these Nocturnes breathe a sentiment of beaming joy. We might almost say they are the development of happiness gained without effort, and enjoyed with raptures. In the second, the tints are darker, like that of light losing itself in a shady alley. We are tempted to assert that, in this song, there predominates the painful feeling of absence, which induced some one to say:

"Absence is a world without a sun."

"The third and sixth are treated more in a pastoral style: the mild breath of balmy breezes pervades their melodies. In them shines the reflection of those changing colors, with which the fleeting vapors of morning dye the dew, so that it is, in turn, roseate, blue, and then lilac. In the last, however, the forms are plainer and the outlines more definite; thus, we perceive, when the oppressive heat of day has dispersed the early fog, wave-shaped vapory forms which roll like a billow with a number of smaller billows, glittering like diamonds, in serpent-like folds, over a landscape beaming with light and freshness. This brilliant clearness is by no means opposed to the title of these pieces, nor was it out of mere whim that Field called one of his nocturnes, 'Midday.' Is this not the dream of a man only half awake in one of those summer nights without darkness in St. Petersburg, which he so often saw? Nights covered with a pale veil, which conceals nothing from the eye, and merely envelopes objects in a mist, not thicker than shining dun-colored silvery crape. A secret affinity dispels the difference between the night shades and the beaming clearness of day, and we no longer are astonished; for the vagueness of the picture causes us to feel that it takes the form it does only in the poet's dreamy fancy, and not in consequence of a model really existing.

"We shall not err in saying that Field's whole life, which was as free from the feverish anxiety to which the wish of seeing and being seen urges most men, as it was unscathed by the parching fire of violent passions, flowed on in a dreamy eisure, lighted up, here and there, by half-tints, and an uncertain *chiaro-oscuro*, and passed away almost like a long Nocturne, without the stormy lightning, or the tempestuous blast disturbing the calm of his peaceable disposition.

"As Clementi's favorite pupil, he learned from that great master the secrets of the most beautiful style of playing of which that epoch could boast, and he changed it into a kind of poetry, in which he will always be an inimitable model of natural grace, melancholy *naïveté*, and, at the same time, simplicity. He is one of those peculiar types of the past school, which are met with only in certain periods of Art, when the latter has already become acquainted with its resources, but has not exhausted them to such an extent as to be tempted to extend its dominion and develop itself more freely, in doing which it has more

than once wounded its wings, while endeavoring to liberate itself from its fetters.

"FRANZ LISZT."

(From Novello's Musical Times.)

Truth about Music and Musicians.

Translated from the German by Sabilla Novello.

No. 7.—"TOO COMPLICATED."

"He who strives to give too much, generally gives too little."

After the performance of a new musical production, no sentences are more commonly heard than, "We cannot pronounce upon its merits after a single hearing."—"We must hear it several times in order to understand it."—"It is a profound work," and so forth. Read every criticism on an important work by Schumann, or others of his class, and I wager you will meet with the above or similar verdicts. *Profound* is a favorite word with shallow critics, for it sounds well. But should we ask them what they would signify by musical profundity, they must remain in our debt for an answer. They consider as *deep* all that they cannot comprehend; but the deepest waters can be clear and translucent as the shallowest rill, while every puddle is opaque, and therefore, *presumptively*, deep! Clearness enables us to perceive depth; but obscurity prevents us from discovering any worthy object hidden beneath its dullness. The general effect of a musical piece must be produced immediately, upon its first performance; although, of course, it is necessary to hear a work several times in order to appreciate and analyze this effect,—to enable scientific judges to recognize, clearly and distinctly, the means by which this effect has been produced, and to become intimately acquainted with finished details and elaborate passages. Even in the present day, works are produced which at once cause a sensation,—which at their first performance find favor with the public and with critics,—and which no one would think of declaring to be all shallow merely on this account. Are not such works, the impression of which is undoubtedly satisfactory after a single performance, preferable to those which we cannot judge to be worthy?—which require that we should point out the possibility that at a future period we may succeed in discovering some hidden merit? Would a composer feel content, when publishing a work, and anxious for its success, if the public instead of awarding ready welcome and enthusiastic applause to his efforts, should refer him to the prospect of a future success,—a bill at six months' notice, which might, perhaps, not even be honored? Impossible! Every artist desires *immediate* success; every artist hopes that his work should elicit the highest possible approbation at its first performance.

Yet, you will say, if this be the case, why are works continually written which call forth the sentences quoted at the commencement of my letter? I have already explained some of the causes, and shall mention others at a later opportunity. In this letter I shall treat of only one, the most important and most general cause, which exerts its injurious influence over even richly-gifted composers, who possess complete mastery over all the technical resources of Art. This manner of writing is *too complicated*; they fall into the error of exaggerated and preëminent polyphony,—of too complicated part-writing; that is, they let too many voices (or parts), which are individually equally significant, speak *simultaneously*. In order to realize vividly the perverseness of such a proceeding, imagine the forty men in an orchestra to be orators, not musicians; *speaking*, not playing,—and that each endeavored to utter an individual and different idea, or to relate an individual and different story;—and that all talked together, now loudly, now whisperingly, and now screamingly;—you would understand *none* of the speakers, and merely hear a confused mass of words. Do not call this exaggeration. You must yourself assuredly remember, even in the works of the best composers, certain passages throughout which the instruments of an orchestra assail the public ear and claim its attention simultaneously by closely-jostled and vociferous phrases, so that you can discern nothing but a meaningless "sound and fury, signifying nothing." But I will simplify the

illustration: let only *four* persons address you simultaneously, each telling you something different, and then repeat to me what you have comprehended from this conversation.

I know the argument you may advance in opposition to what I have said;—I know that a good composer can, in a quartet, let four parts simultaneously flow, and give to each an important meaning, without disturbing the attention of a practised listener or good musician,—without becoming partly or entirely unintelligible. But, in this case, the different parts may utter different melodies, but they express one identical feeling; at all events, each part does not express a totally opposite feeling. Such passages do exist,—passages even of highest beauty,—in many masterpieces; but they can only be recognized by the scientific or artistic listener; to the general public they remain for ever unfathomable mysteries. But passages of this nature, even in the most masterly productions, are some of them incomprehensible, even to the profoundest musician, and are merely a *Babel* of music; therefore they produce no effect, or, which is worse, produce an unpleasant effect, as must be owned by every connoisseur who will honestly confess the real impression made on his soul. Even the greatest masterpieces have their defects, because their creators were but men, and not perfect beings: not the less, however, for this reason are they to be prized for their invaluable merit. Examine the scores of the best masters, from Haydn to Beethoven (excepting the last work of the latter); seek out the artificially constructed polyphone passages, and compare them with those we call homophone, in which only one part stands prominent, while the rest accompany it simply, and you will convince yourself that those polyphone passages form a very small minority, while the large majority consists of simple, and consequently, comprehensible, agreeable, expressive and melodious phrases. Pray remark this well, for herein lies the secret of those masters,—the secret which appears to be entirely lost amongst our modern composers,—the secret of affording delight. Homophone, distinct, simple passages are the light; those artificial polyphone passages the shade. Art is simple; while artificiality is intricate, confused, and complicated. All art, however, is difficult, and artificiality is easy; in the same manner that creation is more difficult than concoction. Man can concoct much, but only Heaven, or heaven-inspired genius, can create. The invention of a beautiful melody is no trifling task,—on the contrary, it presents great difficulties; but any composer, thoroughly acquainted with the technicalities of his science, can at any time, even when not under the influence of inspiration,—even though ungifted with creative fancy, put together artificial, polyphone passages as he might work out an arithmetical enigma. But calculation is not invention, and concoction is not creation.

The want of effect, or disagreeable effect, discernible in many works of our modern composers, may be unhesitatingly pronounced to be attributable to the fact that, in their works, the relative number of polyphone (complicated) and homophone (simple, natural) passages are in exactly contrary proportion to those examples afforded by our great masterpieces; they contain very few or no simple, melodious combinations, but consist principally or entirely of passages of complicated structure, which, by the blind adorners of these present musical idols, are loudly proclaimed to be *deep* and admirable in their mystery. We are told that we must hear this kind of music often, in order to discover its beauty. But these idolaters betray their own perversity by some words, and unwittingly pronounce the truth. Every one seeks for melody in music; when it is not recognized upon first hearing a work, something appears to be missing, and we say, "It will be well to seek once more, and hear the piece again, as the missing article may be concealed amongst the intricacies of its structure." The above named idolaters also miss something, but they cannot tell what; yet still they strive, by their plausible phrases of "profoundity," &c., &c., to throw sand into the eyes of the public, in order that it may not discern the deficiencies of their idols.

Too complicated! this is the fault of such musical productions;—a fault engendered by feebleness or want of creative genius, and by mistaken notions of beauty; for misguided composers actually do exist, who hold that only that which is artificial and scientific can be original, genial, and true,—who look down with contempt on simple, intelligible, and graceful music,—and who are under the delusion that they can force the public to admire their compositions,—that they can induce it to believe that a big, thickly-curling and powdered wig is more beautiful than natural hair. Prizes have been offered for the best symphony that may be composed. I would rather offer prizes for the most expressive, most simple, and therefore the best melody of only sixteen bars, which may be created.

A New Valentine. Meyerbeer and Rossini.

Correspondence of the Boston Courier.

PARIS, Dec. 16, 1858.—The winter still drags on its commencement in the laziest possible way, and seems to announce itself under the most lugubrious aspect. Not a ball has yet been heard of; not a leading *salon* has yet been opened; half the people of any fashion are at their country houses still, and at the opera and at the "*Italiens*" one sees strange faces around. Apropos to the former, there is just the shadow of a bit of news to give: A new *prima donna* has come out as *Valentine* in Meyerbeer's "*Huguenots*," and is for the present worthy not only of notice, but of praise. Madame Barbot is her name, and it was an unknown one until now. She has a very fine soprano voice, she is young and handsome, and decidedly an actress. She has even a certain something that really all but approaches to what unreflecting persons term "*genius*;" that not one in a million ever genuinely possesses, but there is a certain spark from the great flame, a certain reflection from the real light, that whenever it shines, or burns, pleases and satisfies the beholder. Now this spark, this reflected radiance, Madame Barbot undoubtedly has. As a mere vocalist, if she were only that, she would not be sufficient; but being what she is—young, handsome, with a fine voice, and very remarkable dramatic instincts, she is altogether the best *Valentine* that has been seen here for the last dozen years. In the duet of the third act, with *Marcel*, Madame Barbot sings well, and with truth of intonation, (which is a great comfort, after the horrible flat-singing every one accustoms you to at the Grand Opera); but she falls into one odious fault at the close of the beautiful phrase by which the female voice opens the *andante*. This phrase should be sung in time; whereas, since that day when Madame Grisi first sang the part of *Valentine* (taught her no doubt by some Italian professor, who arranged it *à sa manière*), it has become the fashion to make an indefinite rest upon the last high note, and thus absolutely distort the entire rhythmic sense of the passage.

In the fourth act, however, (and this is the important part.) I can almost unreservedly praise Madame Barbot. She was really very remarkable throughout. Her reading of that most difficult passage, "*Reste! reste! je l'aime!*" was, I think, the most perfect I have ever heard, being at once the most passionate and the most regretful. It was womanly in the extreme—sorrowful and desperate, tender and chaste. Too much credit cannot be given to this young singer and actress for her performance of this most trying scene.

As to swelling the chorus of those who chaunt Meyerbeer's eulogies for the magnificence of certain parts of the "*Huguenots*," I am not prepared to do it; but I cannot refrain from describing one curious little proof of the beauty of the fourth act that passed under my own eyes. The box I was in was immediately above the entrance to the pit, where stand the police agents and a gendarme. Towards the end of the duet, between *Roual* and *Valentine*, just in the most dramatic portion of it, and where really the music, when even tolerably executed only, does carry you "out of yourself," I chanced to catch a sight of the foremost *Sergent de la ville*. The man was literally wrapt in ecstasy! His hands were clasped, his eyes strained to devour the action before him in its every detail, and his whole expression one of an intensity of admiration, I do not remember ever to have witnessed. To touch the heart of a policeman! This is a triumph I do not presume any dramatic author, lyrical or otherwise, ever before achieved; and I would advise Meyerbeer, if he ever hears it told, to put it down as the one largest leaf of his crown of bay.

By the bye, there is, talking of great composers, a very interesting anecdote, for the truth of which I can vouch. Some months ago, Rossini received a visit from Meyerbeer, and the latter perceived in his illus-

trious friend's room, a portrait of Mozart. He looked at it, and then said: It is not at all like—it is not the right one—we have one at the *Mozarteums* in Salzburg, that is the real one, but this is quite inferior." Rossini looked grieved, and said he really was so. "I had rejoiced in that portrait," he observed, "and used often to look for a long while at the features, and cheat myself into the notion I had seen him."

When Meyerbeer took his leave, he did so with a promise to send Rossini a copy of the picture in the *Mozarteums*. A few weeks ago he brought the Photograph to Paris, and sent it to his colleague in Apollo. Rossini's letter, written to Meyerbeer to thank him for the present, is a *chef d'œuvre* (though very short) of fine language and fine feeling; and there is something touching in this homage rendered to the glorious author of *Don Juan* by the authors of the *Huguenots* and of *Guillaume Tell*. When men reach the topmost heights of renown, one of the first great and young qualities that they generally lose is the capacity of admiration; they narrow down mostly into an excessive pre-occupation of what they themselves achieve, and what they do rises up and stands between them and their appreciation of the beautiful in itself. There is a passage in Cousin's volume on "*Le Vrai, le Beau, et le Bien*," that has always struck me as one of the truest and most elevated sentences to be found in any modern writer—it is a recommendation to admire unsparingly: "To discover and to prove that beauty fails in such or such a thing, is an ungrateful task," says the great philosopher; "to understand when beauty is anywhere present; to feel and make others feel its presence, is an exquisite enjoyment, a generous undertaking. Admiration is for him who can feel it an honor and a happiness. It is a happiness to feel the beautiful, it is an honor to reveal it to others. Admiration is the sign of a noble intellect well served by a noble heart. It is the vital principle of superior criticism, of the criticism that does good; it is as it were the god-like part of what men call taste."

I know of nothing finer in the works of any aesthetician, ancient or modern; and no better example of this instruction put in practice can be found, it appears to me, than in the anecdote I have just related. This capacity of admiration preserved at an age when the smaller instincts are usually most vivacious, and by two men who are anything save sentimental, seems to me a fact to be chronicled.

I must, however, add the following conclusion to the story: it was told as I tell it you here, by a person who had read Rossini's letter to Meyerbeer; and after those present had expressed their satisfaction at it—"Yes," remarked M. *****, a man famous here for his causticity, but I wish Mozart were alive—the admiration would be so much the more meritorious!" I do not and will not share the doubt here hinted at, but I have no right to withhold the story of its having been expressed, for M. ———'s *mot* is repeated all over Paris.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

Mr. Stoepel's "Hiawatha" Music.

The Boston Theatre was not over full on Saturday evening, at the first public performance of Mr. ROBERT STOEPEL'S "Hiawatha." The composer calls this work a "Romantic Symphony." It is, properly speaking, a Cantata, with added recitations. The performance was too long, lasting nearly three hours, and, if the recitations of Mrs. STOEPEL were omitted altogether, the work would gain in compactness and unity. The attention of the listener is distracted by the frequent jumps from speaking to singing and back again; and, though Mrs. Stoepel read her part with less of her usual peculiarities of manner, the musical portion, if given by itself, would be less tedious and more interesting.

Mr. Stoepel had the advantage of an excellent orchestra. The delicacy and good taste, with which all the instrumental portion was given, were a delightful experience to ears irritated by the noisy, coarse playing of Mr. Anschutz's band. The orchestra on Saturday was well constituted, having four contra-bassi, and a large body of strings. It is gratifying to find a band, composed entirely of Boston musicians, play with so much unity, precision, and true artistic feeling. The chorus, like all our home-made choruses, sang in that business-like, steady, respectable manner, which, though it insures correctness, is inconsistent with any enthusiasm or hearty sympathy in the singers, and thence, of necessity, in the audience. Mr.

Stoepel's choral music, being mostly mystical and fanciful in design, suffered especially from this see-saw mechanical style of singing.

Of the three solo singers, Mrs. HARWOOD and Mr. MILLARD both did justice to their parts. Not so Mr. WETHERBEE, for lack of voice. Mrs. Harwood sang with a good taste and refinement that she has not lately accustomed us to. She has great natural advantages of voice and person, and might be an excellent singer, if she would always do as well as on Saturday. Mr. Millard gave a pleasant light tenor voice, and sings in a good Italian method. He is apt to sacrifice the words to the notes, but our mother-tongue is so desperately hard to distinctly enunciate in singing, that we cannot be very severe with him for this peculiarity. As a whole, the performance was a very fair one; and, allowing for the difficulty of rightly judging a work of any importance at one hearing, a tolerable idea could be gained on Saturday of Mr. Stoepel's claims as a composer—so far as this production is concerned.

It seems almost damning him with faint praise to say that "Hiawatha" is a composition creditable to Mr. Stoepel; and yet we cannot, in honesty, judging only from Saturday's experience, say more. There is no bad music in the piece, but neither is there much that is especially good, or indeed in any way remarkable. It is well orchestrated, the vocal parts are written with knowledge of the requirements and capacities of the voice, and the whole composition is free from crudities or any glaring faults. It is the work of a man who understands his business, and knows the use of his tools. But it seems to be rather the result of thought, time and labour, than the spontaneous creation of a mind which must make itself understood from the presence of ideas demanding utterance. Not that Mr. Stoepel's melodies are often far-fetched or artificial, but that they are commonplace, being rather correct cantabile phrases, duly accented and pointed, than vivid, salient tunes. There is a certain monotony in the whole work—the orchestra is always used properly, the parts are full, each instrument having its share, but there is never anything which seizes the attention of the hearer, which compels him to listen—no new effects of sonority—it is all quite right, and according to receipt, but it is hardly anything more. And so in the voice parts—they are unobjectionable, cleverly written, sometimes quite pretty, and that is all. The complets, "Cradle song," very nicely done by Mrs. Harwood, are good, genuine, vocal music, such as is agreeable to both singer and listener, with a well-written, flowing accompaniment. The Barcarole of Mr. Millard we did not like as well. The rhythm is affected, and the composer seems to be striving after an effect of careless gayety, which he does not succeed in obtaining. The Trio at the end of Part 1st, (as much of it as was audible,) the bass part being for the audience a mere hypothesis, was well done, and is perhaps as good a specimen of Mr. Stoepel's manner as any number in the piece. The "Beggar Dance," for Orchestra, in Part 2d, excellently played, is a characteristic bit, and though not very new in idea, had a certain savage energy in it, resembling in its rhythm the melodies of the Arabs. Mr. Millard's complets, "Onaway! awake, beloved," were deservedly encored. They are two stanzas of tender, graceful music, sung by Mr. M. with a pathos and expression that did him credit. In the "Chorus of Ravens," Mr. Stoepel's memory got the better of his invention—it too closely resembles the "Valse infernale" in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*. The "Harvest Chorus" commences and ends with a smooth, well balanced melody, nicely harmonized, but it is disfigured by the introduction of a trivial waltz tune, the only really incongruous thing in the whole piece. The "Chorus of Ghosts," which follows, is too much spun-out; there is in it however more colour and truth to the sentiment indicated than in any other portion of the work.

The first part of Minnehaha's death-song, put into the form of couplets (a style the composer seems to affect), is ugly, the passages being *saccadé* and the intervals unvocal; the ending is a very plaintive and charming piece of *seprano* singing. The finale is the best piece in the whole composition—the theme is luscious, ear-haunting and appropriate—well wrought out in the voices and orchestra, long-continued, yet coherent, and the conclusion is especially original and beautiful.

"Hiawatha" was at least a *succes d'estime*—perhaps something more—how much more time alone can show. Judged as the work of a practised and experienced composer, it merits no great eulogium; but if it be, as we believe it is, the first composition of any magnitude that Mr. Stoepel has produced, it does him great credit—more, it is true, from the absence of faults than the presence of merits; but for a young composer it is a work of promise, which we trust may be fulfilled. It lacks chiefly what in this year of grace, '59, is so hard to find—melodic invention—new musical ideas. Mr. Stoepel has shown that he knows perfectly how to write; let him now prove that he can also produce what shall be really worth writing. He has mastered the manner—let him show that he has in him the matter, without which a composer, however finished his style, is less an artist than an artisan.

C. J. T.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, DEC. 31, 1858.—MR. GOLDBECK'S third concert, on Thursday of last week, was not as attractive in any respect, as his former ones. The programme was much more commonplace, and the performances not so good. Mr. Goldbeck gave us chiefly his own compositions, and not the most interesting of those. A "Fantasia from *Trovatore*," and "Improvisations on the *Marseillaise*" savor rather more of humbug than is worthy of an artist like Mr. Goldbeck. Liszt's "Preludes" for two pianos, though excellently played by MESSRS. GOLDBECK and MAXSON, was as uninteresting as are all the compositions of the great pianist. Two *Etudes* by Mr. Goldbeck were the most pleasing things that he gave us. Besides all this, we had a solo from ED. MOLLENHAUER, and vocal pieces by Misses ANDEM and COMSTOCK, and Dr. GUILMETTE. The second named young lady is a recent debutante; she has a fine, sympathetic voice, and pleasing, unassuming manners. I would, however, advise her to sing pieces that lie originally in the compass of her voice, and not spoil the effect of others by transposition, as she did with Beethoven's *Ah perfido*, which was in itself rather difficult for her.

On Christmas night, the Harmonic Society gave their annual performance of the "Messiah," with I am sorry to say, their annual faults. It is painful to be unable from year to year to discern the least improvement in the efforts of such a society. This proves but too plainly how little real Art-love has to do with these performances. I refer of course, merely to the chorus; the solo singers always give more or less satisfaction, none more so than Miss BRAINERD, with her pure, true voice, and her earnest conception of what she sings. A refreshing contrast to the Harmonic Society was presented by the "Leiderkranz," in their production of "The Creation," on Tuesday last. I have rarely if ever heard better chorus singing in our city. The precision and spirit with which the charming music was rendered, told of earnest practice. The only fault one could find was in the first chorus, where the beginning was not sufficiently pianissimo, to give the full effect to "And there was Light." Of the solos, I regret that I cannot give the same good account; Madame CAVADORI, it is true, did her part, and more than her part, admirably, inasmuch as on account of the illness of M^{me}. ZIMMER-

MANN, she represented both Gabriel and Eve. Mr. UCHS, who sang Adam, was also good, but of the other two gentlemen the least said the better, in view of their having volunteered their services for a benevolent object. The orchestra also did their part exceedingly well, and on the whole, the very numerous audience appeared very well satisfied.

The New Year was yesterday worthily ushered in by one of MASON and THOMAS's Matinées, which was a rich treat. Beethoven's quartet, Op. 17, No. 6, was exquisitely played, and was followed by solos from Wm. Mason and Theodore Thomas. Mr. Mason gave us a *Bullade* and *Etude* of his own, which seemed to me, at first hearing, to be far above common worth. Mr. Thomas played a *Tarantelle* of Schubert, which was extremely interesting both from its novelty and its great beauty. It opens with a slow introduction, the long-drawn, melodious tones of which were most finely rendered by the young violinist. The *Tarantelle* movement is very original, and full of strength and vigor, to which the player also did ample justice. The fourth and last number of the programme was another novelty, a Trio by BARGIEL.

Who is Bargiel? some may ask. He is a half-brother of CLARA SCHUMANN, and still quite a young man. The name brings to us pleasant memories of a stay in Berlin, where some dear friends took lessons of him, and told me much about him. Also of a meeting, some months later, with Bettina and her daughters at Weimar, and an afternoon spent with them there, where we were joined by Joachim, Hans v. Buclow, and Bargiel, whom the latter introduced, and in whom I was surprised to find so young and diminutive an individual. It is only since then, I think, that he has made his debut as a composer. And this is not one of the least of his class, this Trio proves. It abounds in originality, has pleasing melodies, and is very beautifully instrumented. Of course one hearing of a work of this kind cannot enable one to judge of its merit; but the impression itself was a most favorable one, particularly so as it was very finely interpreted by Messrs. Mason, Thomas and Bergmann. The concert was held in Dodworth's Hall, and I am sure many a regretful thought of poor EISELDE must have mingled with the sensations produced by the music. Many of us miss him sadly this winter, but unfortunately there are but few of those who did miss him who are willing to be friends in deed in both senses. Messrs. NOLL, BEYER, and BERGUER, Mr. Eisfeld's colleagues in the quartet, have issued a circular, proposing to continue the quartet soirées in Mr. Eisfeld's name, with the assistance of a number of pianists, and those artists who have offered their services, and to appropriate the proceeds for the benefit of Mr. Eisfeld; but, will you believe it, the requisite number of subscribers, small at best, could not be mustered! Is it not a crying shame that a man who has devoted himself to the cause of Art so disinterestedly, and for so many years, who is so well known and liked, can not find "in time of need, more appreciation and gratitude."

NEW YORK, JAN. 11. — Who can complain at the present day, of not being able to hear enough good music in New York, when, in thirty-six hours (as was the case last week) he has the opportunity of listening to *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and a Philharmonic concert (with its morning rehearsal).

Of the operas I can tell you nothing new, after your own interesting analyses and criticisms. The representations were both very happy ones, and it was a great treat to me to hear *Figaro* once more for the first time since my visit to Germany. In *Don Giovanni*, (which was given as a matinée), PICCOLOMINI's conception of Zerlina is indeed quite a novel one, but her interpretation is so irresistibly charming and cunning, that one cannot but be attracted by the new character which she creates.

The Philharmonic concert was one of the finest, if

not the finest, which has ever taken place in New York. The programme had but two faults, it was too long, (more from the length of its pieces than from their number,) and there was a little too much of Mendelssohn. The excellence, however, of what there was, would make one forget this. The Symphony was played with rare perfection, and, even new in its great beauty, was hailed with warm applause. The Overtures too, were very finely rendered. That by Schubert is very spirited, but needs a nearer acquaintance to be fully appreciated. Weber's "Ruler of the Spirits," we have heard before; and, though not as attractive as some others by the same master, it is always welcome. Madame JOHNSON-GRAEVER was warmly welcomed, having already won a high place in the regard of the musical public. The playing was what it always is, but the composition was not so effective, by any means, as other pieces of her repertoire. It was tame and heavy, and long, and struck me as hardly worthy of its author. Towards the end, too, Mme. Graever showed signs of fatigue, which made it still more uninteresting. As a composition it was, in every respect, a striking contrast to the beautiful, melodious, soulful violin concerto, the performance of which, by Mr. "BRUNO WOLLENHAUPT," was one of the novelties of the evening. This gentleman is a younger brother of the pianist, and composer of the same name, in this city. He has been a pupil of Vieuxtemps, if I am not mistaken, and has just returned from several years of study abroad. This was his first appearance here, and he has reason to be well satisfied with his reception. His bold and spirited, and yet deeply expressive playing, his clear, strong tone, and the evident enthusiasm which accompanied his performance, roused the audience to a degree seldom before equalled. He bids fair to occupy a prominent position in the musical world of our city, and all who are interested in the cause and progress of music will join me in heartily wishing him all success, and in the hope of hearing him often in public.

Another new feature in Saturday's programme was the two choruses. The first is of acknowledged beauty, but it loses much in being torn from the opera, where the situation adds so much to its impressiveness. For this reason the chorus from *Rienzi*, which, though far inferior in intrinsic value, was noisy, spirited, and finely harmonized and instrumented, proved far more effective, and was encored. The choral parts were very well sung, but in the solos there was much room for improvement.

Regular opera-goers are having "a good time," now. The new season commences on Thursday with *Don Giovanni*, substituted, (on account of Brignoli's indisposition) for *La Zingara*; on Friday night *Figaro*, for the same reason, was given instead of *Martha*. Saturday, as I have told you, *Don Giovanni* again as a matinée. N. B. Does it not strike you that POINSON, splendidly as her voice suits the part of Donna Anna, is wanting in delicacy in the representation of that part? In the touching scene after the death of her father, for instance, not to mention other similar instances, she screamed out the music, with no regard to the situation; with the recollection of the heart-broken, touching pianissimo tones with which I have heard others breathe out their lament over the corpse, the effect of this was very unpleasant to me.

Last night *La Zingara* was at last produced — at least the papers do not say that it was again postponed — and to-day, for the benefit of the St. George's Society, there is to be a matinée, with *Martha* and *La Serva Padrona*, and a concert and oratorio in the evening, when, besides miscellaneous music, the finest parts of the "Creation" will be given, the choruses by the Liederkreis, and the solos by the artists of the opera. Apropos of *Martha*, I am glad to find that you are converted from your dislike to it. Of its kind I have always thought it one of the prettiest of little operas, both in plot and music.

NEW YORK, JAN. 3, 1859. — I find in my Owl Book [page 894, paragraph XXIX.] the following profound axiom: "He who talks most, balks most," which I suppose may be also applied to writing, though I have not the direct authority of the Owl Book in support of this theory. My object for quoting the above beautiful axiomatic phrase, is to confess that I may have talked or written too much. Your correspondent "—t—" appears to think that I have written flippantly in regard to the mystical signature appended to the communications of said correspondent; consequently I would wish to publicly protest against any such misconception of my words. "—t—" is viewed by me with too much respect to make me desire to indulge in flippancy towards the said individual.

And as I write with my cherished Owl Book by my side, my eye falls on another paragraph, and I read: "When a vacuity in extraneous objects presents itself to the astonished and wondering gaze, when the usual functions of activity in social, moral and physical matter, are divested of their identity, and lost in the vortex of void, when there in short remains but a nonentity of actions to be performed, it is expedient that those requirements be fulfilled without an intervening iota of time, forming a deteriorating chasm." This beautiful—I may say eloquent passage may be abridged, (as it will be in my juvenile edition of the Owl Book), into "When you have nothing to do, do it at once," and thus you will see it has direct reference to my musical duties during the past week. There has been nothing to do, and with that unflinching fortitude, and that prompt alacrity for which I am so eminent, I did it.

To be sure, there were some German demonstrations. Haydn's "Creation" was given in German text by a German musical society, with German soloists, for the benefit of a German charitable society, and before an exclusively German audience. Then another set of Germans hired the Academy of Music one evening, and gave a \$2-a-ticket-concert for another German benevolent affair.

Then there was a little hemi-private, demi-public concert given by the Sunday School of St. George's Church, in aid of a building fund for a missionary church to be erected in some part of the city. MÖLLENHAUER, the violinist, played, and Mr. GEORGE BRISTOW, the organist of the church, presided at the piano. There was some mediocre singing, the chief applause of the evening being allotted to APTOMMAS the harpist, who played a number of his most beautiful selections. He is a member of this church, and a personal friend of the pastor, Rev. Dr. Tyng. It was a very gratifying concert, and all those who took part in the musical performance, gave their services, gratuitously.

Our city churches take more interest in music than they used to, and I notice, that the plan of having children take part in the musical portion of the exercises is becoming more general. Quartet choirs are falling below par. By the way, MIRANDA, the tenor of Cooper's English Opera Troupe, has been engaged to sing at Dr. Macauley's Church in Fifth Avenue. Dr. GUILMETTE, the baritone, too sings there, and WILLIAM A. KING, formerly of Grace Church, is the organist. They have just got a new organ, built by Robjohn, of this city — who once was famous as a balloonist and dabbler in aeronautic experiments — which possesses some very peculiar features.

We have some very beautiful churches in this city, and some of them are furnished with excellent choirs. It is my intention to go prowling about them this winter, and I may thus be enabled to furnish you with some particulars in regard to the New York churches and their music.

TROVATOR.

PHILADELPHIA, JAN. 10. — Ullman's characteristic grandiloquent manifestoes, are even now raining with floodlike vehemence upon the public of Phila-

delphia; and ere long will the excitements of a magnificent opera season burst over the polite circles of the city, like a mighty freshet which bears away every opposing barrier. PICCOLOMINI, FORMES, & Co. are announced for Friday night, to appear in the "Child of the Regiment;" and I propose, next week to record, in the columns of your Journal, the extent of success which they will then have achieved here. For my own part, I have heard *la petite Comtesse* in New York, and I promise her that position in the hearts of opera habitués here, which a pretty face, consummate *savoir faire*, fascinating grace, excellent identification with character, and dramatic intensity invariably acquire for the foot-light cantatrice. The Harmonia Sacred Music Society presents, in its announced concert for to-night, two features which must insure an appreciative and remunerative audience.

1. Miss HENRIETTA SIMON, a reputed pupil of the gifted La Grange, makes her *debut* in this city. She is represented to be a charming singer, with a singularly flexible, rich, and sympathetic voice, and a truthful method which she has assiduously cultivated for several years. Much interest seems to be evinced in this first appearance of a young lady, who has received an unqualified endorsement from so distinguished a preceptor.

2. The second prominent feature of this entertainment consists in fingers and feet mechanically, and in brains intellectually. Mr. CHARLES JEROME HOPKINS, styled "the young American organist," is this other predominant feature. We have heard him before; and it seems to me I then wrote to you, that his execution was correct and brilliant, his improvisation finished, and his knowledge of the instrument perfect, but that his impulsive temperament served to mar the fine rhythmic effect of the elegant compositions which he performed. You shall have a detailed account of all these entertainments, operatic and concert, next week. MANRICO.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

Mr. Stœpel's Romantic Symphony "Hiawatha."

Mr. Editor:—Happening to be in Boston in time to have the pleasure of hearing the first production of this new work, I am prompted to offer you a few hasty notes of my impressions. Mr. ROBERT STœPEL is a clever musician, and the Sinfonia-Cantata "Hiawatha" is unquestionably a work of high art, challenging regard for much excellence rather in its descriptive than in an intrinsically musical aspect. Yet in detail much might be improved as regards the symmetry and euphony of the *toute ensemble*.

It is not for me, only after a first hearing, to dare enter minutely into an explication of my views relative to certain passages and counter-passages of this meritorious composition. Nor would it be fair to the gifted composer were I to analyze and dissect his offspring, amidst a people to whom he is a stranger, and whose musical predilections and sympathies lie not in the same channel as his; because I have yet to hear it again in order to find out many of its beauties and to apply dispassionately the touch-stone of criticism to its many parts.

But a slight examination of "Hiawatha" without entering fully into its various phases would ensure the belief that it is destined to enjoy public favor, if not as an entire work, at least partially.

The opening of the symphony is very suggestive of the reading relative to the Peace-pipe in the wilderness, and the attempt to illustrate the rising smoke, although somewhat vague and indefinite, is however characteristic. The song of the Great Spirit, which was sung rather tamely by Mr. WETHERBEE, is a sort of *sostenuto* movement, in which the orchestra does more than the singer, and one calculated to show off the upper notes of a Baritone, and I think that this song demanded a voice of a more vibrant quality than Mr. Wetherbee's, for he was inaudible in some parts,

so great was the predominance of the brass instruments. Why is it that the modern *maestri* rely so much on brass for certain effects? The disciples of Meyerbeer must surely forget that the very *timbre* of certain brass instruments tends to destroy the ideal aspect they are intended to convey. The "Shower of Stars," musically depicted, was both suggestive and pretty, and here the more delicate instruments of the orchestra stood out in fine character. The first strictly metrical movement of the work is presented in the chorus, describing Nokomis's descent to earth, &c. In this there is a pretty *motivo* rendered very striking indeed by the orchestral treatment, especially the *Pizzicato* of the violins. The "Cradle Song," so admirably sung by Mrs. HARWOOD, is a sweet production, and the orchestral accompaniment obviously supplies the idea of a rocking movement, while the song itself recalls a lullaby. Some of the intermezzos here, as elsewhere were lost through the untimely applause. She also rendered very efficiently the "Death song of Minnehaha," which is indeed a beautiful production. The hautboy initiates the subject with a fine minor solo, after which the song begins, sustained by an effective accompaniment. The phrases are short and *piquant*, and in this manner, intelligibly appealing to the love of short phrases, innate in learned and unlearned, it drew forth a warm encore, which was responded to by the Soprano. The "Canoe Building Song" and "Chibiabos' Love Song," sung by Mr. MILLARD, are both gems of tenor songs. The first is original, peculiar and somewhat quaint.

The Tenor did not seem decided and confident in rendering it. It seems to me that something *sostenuto* in character invariably presents such voices in a more favorable aspect, than these jerking unsteady movements. In order that a Tenor should feel his position secure, that is, get accustomed to the orchestra's weight, and attune his voice properly to its temperament, there is nothing so favorable as passages which allow him to lean on his voice, or, to speak *à la Duprez*, "*poser la voix*." He sang the "Onaway! Awake beloved," with more sweetness and effect, and received an encore. Such a beautiful composition in the serenade form must please any one, and, with the exception of a slight *faux pas* in the orchestra, it was altogether charming. Mr. Millard's voice is sweet and round in the middle *registre*, but not powerful, and loses color in the upper notes. It seems better adapted for subjects bearing light accompaniments, than for those which presuppose the efforts of a *tenore di forza*. Thus the voice was in many places over-shaded by the *fortissimo* of the orchestra. His pronunciation is not very distinct, but he sings in just tune by way of compensation, and this latter "covereth a multitude of sins." This serenade bids fair to be a general favorite, because the air is strikingly beautiful, and the phrases are short and therefore easy to catch, on the same principle that short sentences are more intelligible and easier of retention than long ones.

The Trio, "Hiawatha's wooing," by Mrs. HARWOOD, Messrs. Millard and Wetherbee, is a solemn, and chaste *morceau*. It begins by the Tenor with a passage not unlike church music, and the other parts work in gradually, until all unite in concert. The accompaniments discourse a prominent melody while the voices have long, flowing sounds. As this is the only Trio in the work, I wondered at the audience not encoring it, not only for this reason, but especially because, as a concerted piece, it is really beautiful. The Baritone was hardly powerful enough for the others. Mr. Stœpel's orchestral treatment of this piece, is artistic and tasteful; and if nothing else speaks him a maestro, the Trio, with its admirable motives and accompaniments, eloquently proclaims it. The Orchestral description of "The fight with Mudjekeewis" and "The War song," was effective as a martial piece. The drums and clashing of instruments against each other by contrary motions, although somewhat exaggerated, seemed truthful.

"The Beggar Dance," in which the Piccolo begins the motive, is not unlike a Scotch *gigue* in character, but not in treatment. There is an air of wildness pervading this piece, reminding one of the *tambour* dance of Curacao, in which the beats, so rhythmical and precise, assumes a higher tone, or rather are the chief characteristic of the whole. Like the "Dansa Habanero," the contrary motions are greater features than the air or harmony.

The "Raven's chorus," is the most original of all—bold and characteristic, especially where the violins usher in two peculiar notes, so suggestive of the Raven's cry. The Harvest Chorus is a cheerful one. The air is pretty and striking, and the second section in the minor especially sweet and novel in structure.

Perhaps the most successful illustration is that of "Winter." Mr. Stœpel here employs his bassoons and clarinets with great judgment, and the Double Basses serve, with the Kettle Drums, and with the blast of the brass instruments, to depict the dismal aspect of the "year's decay." The Orchestra was faithful in its task, and seemed, on the whole, more *au fait* in this than in the other illustrations.

The last piece of the Cantata is the "Chorus of Spring," which drew a warm encore. This piece was very characteristic of early spring and the song of birds, and other beauties which spring brings forth. The flute had some very sweet passages, and indeed all the instruments, together with the voices, united in presenting a very cheerful and jubilant *toute ensemble*. To close a work of this nature, Mr. R. could not have adopted a more effective chorus, because cheerful in the first place, and in the second place broad and grand, both as regards its nature and treatment. The only glaring defect of the evening was the mistake of the Sopranos, who ushered in their parts eight bars sooner than the time. The Reading by Miss HERON was impassioned and dramatic in many points, and on the whole seemed quite in character and not overdone. There were passages in which she was scarcely audible, but no one can manage the voice effectively in a sitting posture. Her voice is very musical, although somewhat worn. Yet the warmth and earnestness of Miss Heron's reading, and her close attention to quantities and euphony, even with a less distinct enunciation than she possesses, would be acceptable, and would entitle the reader to great consideration. To the composer and conductor, I would add the compliment that his Cantata is a work which a Berlioz, (the last authority on Orchestration) might be proud of. It is, however, a production capable of sustaining a dispassionate criticism, such as would in some few instances, not exactly suit his theory, but which perhaps might present a balance in which his merits would outweigh his few defects.

STRAY MUSICIAN IN MODERN ATHENS.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JAN. 15, 1859.

Mr. Robert Stœpel's "Hiawatha."

The first production of Mr. STœPEL's "Romantic Symphony," as he has seen fit to call his music to the salient points of Longfellow's Indian poem, did not draw to the Boston Theatre so large an audience as we had hoped to see, or as the work deserved. But the impression that it made was such as to make it imperative that it be performed again. There are, of course, different opinions of its merit, as there must be about any musical work of magnitude, when first produced before a comparatively unmusical people. To candid expressions of two such, widely differing, but honest, we have given place in another part of this paper. If the more cool and cautious judgment of "C. J. T." be supposed the right one, there is even then enough acknowledged to give "Hiawatha" a high claim to a hearing and to satisfy any musical person that he could not hear it without interest. The testimony of the great majority of those who heard

the work is much more warm, in many instances amounting to enthusiasm, and in some cases to the most desperate extravagance of praise. Newspaper critics riot in superlatives, as if they had discovered a new Shakspeare. They talk of its marking "an era in our musical history"; of "his infinite resources of counterpoint and imitation" (more could not be said of Bach or Handel); of "imaginative and creative genius of the highest order" (what is there left to say of Beethoven or Mozart?); of having "found no instrumental writing finer than this of Mr. Stöpel's," and more *ad nauseam*. Let us, at least, avoid all such extravagance. Better for the artist that his work fail to meet due recognition all at once, or for a long time, than that it go forth coupled from the first with such pretensions. Never was any Beethoven or Mendelssohn, in countries where they *do* appreciate such efforts, greeted on a first production in such terms. The title to such epithets can only be established in the course of time. It is simply presumptuous because we like a thing, because it gives us pleasure or surprise, to place it all at once upon a level with the greatest that has been achieved by human genius. For ourselves, in speaking of Mr. Stöpel's music, we feel that it would be presumption either to call it *great*, to hail it as a work of high imaginative genius, or to deny that it has real claims upon the world's attention.

What we can sincerely say is, that we listened to the whole with great, with unexpected pleasure. Regarding the performance from no conventional or absolutely musical point of view, but simply as an entertainment *sui generis*, as a form of Art quite novel and peculiar, to-wit, the illustration of a poem, based on wild Indian life, by means of instruments and voices, with the aid of recitation, we found it deeply interesting to the end. There was a wild, romantic charm about it, entirely, at it seemed to us, in keeping with the poem. We enjoyed the music quite as much as we enjoy the poem. We never could admire the "Song of Hiawatha" so much as some other poems of its author. Perhaps our difficulty is with Indian subjects altogether. In spite of their picturesque life, and their romantic legends, there is a certain monotony, a certain faded, superannuated sort of feeling, that comes over us in reading of them. This savage, dying out life lacks just that germinal vitality out of which poetry, and certainly all music springs. Hence we felt with "C. J. T." that this music was somewhat monotonous, while, at the same time it seemed all the truer therein to the poem; and therefore its success or unsuccess could scarcely be a full test of the musical creative powers of the composer in the truest sense.

But while it was monotonous it was also interesting, in many parts beautiful, and not without a wild, peculiar charm. Of form and treatment there was variety enough; the monotony consisted rather in the absence throughout of what we should call imaginative vitality. A man may be a fine musician, (as Mr. Stöpel plainly is), and have a fine poetic temperament, and yet lack that; it belongs to the *great* men; it is an attribute of that which is the rarest thing in this world, genius. The only work we know of in the same form is the "Desert" by Felicien David: and we must say that we enjoyed "Hiawatha" far more than we did that. "Hiawatha" seemed to us to have more meat in it; more musical ma-

terial; more thought; more wealth of color; more variety. The instrumental portions were what pleased us most. Indeed Mr. Stöpel shows himself a master of orchestral combinations; he is at home there, to say the least.

The opening snatches of instrumental music were suggestive of the poetic images, the forest stillness, the rising smoke, &c.; and the "Song of the Great Spirit" is a grave, appropriate melody, with fit orchestral background, delivered with taste, but without telling weight of voice by Mr. WETHERBEE. The chorus No. 2, has a sweet melodious kind of motive, warmly colored by the instruments, but not particularly striking, although there are nice effects in the orchestra. The suggestion of starlight in high violin tones was delicate and pure. The "Cradle Song," a simple, tender melody, a little commonplace, was beautifully sung by Mrs. HARWOOD. The "Canoe building song," is a spirited, quaint Barcarole, not, perhaps, particularly original in its theme, but set off brightly by the orchestra. It was effectively sung by Mr. MILLARD, and we wondered that it was not encored like the other solos.

The "Fight with Mudjeckewis," was a very impressive instrumental piece, beginning with strange Indian-like balancings and approaches, as of first one party and then the other, indicated by short, rude, ponderous phrases, which are worked up with effective imitations, till the conflict becomes grand and exciting, and the piece ends with smart, crisp, fiery chords, reiterated with all the force of the instruments, in a manner that might remind one a little of one of Beethoven's fiery overtures, say *Coriolanus*. This seemed to us the best piece. The "Wooring" Trio, is full of ingenuity, and doubtless of beauty, which was marred in the performance.

The "Beggar Dance," in its opening "solemn measure" is thoroughly Indian, barren of course of all but rhythm, and yet worked up to be musically interesting; the jig-like movement into which it led sounded a little too familiar; the Indians must have known rum and white men before they danced to such tunes. The "Love Song" won great applause, and is really a charming serenade. There was something choice and delicate, and really poetic, as it struck us, in the music of the "Blessing of the Cornfield,"—something mystical, and yet innocent, as it should be. And after this the "Ravens" come in with their quaint, eaving, saucy phrases with most effective contrast. The chorus, though, of male voices, wanted rehearsal. This is a thing scarcely to be secured here to a degree requisite to the fair representation of a new work; and this was one of the many obstacles which Mr. S. had had to contend with. The "Harvest Chorus" is beautifully natural and simple in its motive, and not common-place. "Winter" and the "Ghosts" is the one scene where the poem rises to sublimity. We thought the orchestral picture very true, and the chorus which followed exceedingly impressive and mournful, commenced by the sopranos on a high pitch, admirably prepared by contrast in the low and sombre instrumental harmonies. The "Death Song" was touching, and the "Return of Spring" chorus, while it reminded one very strongly of the opening of Spohr's "Consecration of Tones" Symphony, by its bird-imitations, &c., by the way in which the leading melody sets out, is yet original, and broad and noble. Its fault was only too great length, too many returns of the theme.

The readings by Mrs. STÖPEL were finely conceived, and sometimes touchingly dramatic. But to our taste, plain, simple reading, without action, would be more appropriate, leaving all the coloring of the poet's idea to the music. There was something very pleasant, and which at once commanded respect, in the thoroughly sympathetic and earnest manner in which the lady entered with her whole heart into the production of her husband's work. And he, too, claimed the most respectful attention, by the modest, gentlemanly, firm and quiet air with which he presided over the performance of his own work. He showed himself an excellent conductor. So that altogether it was a unique, a refined, artistic, intellectual occasion.

These are mere hints of first impressions—cautious, as we think they should be. We purposely abstain from entering into a critical analysis of the work. Our object now is simply to show that "Hiawatha" merits to be performed again, many times, and that it fairly claims that much more general and appreciative hearing which we are sure it must have when it is repeated. We are glad to learn that it is the composers' intention to produce it here again within a few weeks.

Musical Chit-Chat.

Need we remind our readers of CARL ZERRAHN'S first Orchestral Concert at the Music Hall this evening? This is the occasion which most of all others, under our musical circumstances, deserves a full house and the most liberal patronages. The really important "events" in a community not more advanced in music than we are, are not the rarest novelties, not the productions of new works, new experiments, but whatever tends to the institution, permanently, of opportunities of hearing and knowing the acknowledged master-works of musical genius. We could better afford never to hear a new play, than we could to go on in ignorance of Shakspeare. So in music, we want to make it sure that we shall always have the chance to hear the Symphonies of BEETHOVEN, &c. Such chances must depend in future on the support we give to enterprises like Mr. Zerrahn's. Let every real music-lover go to-night. Give the thing a good start. Then we shall get more and more of the best sort of music. Read his programme in another column. The "Pastoral Symphony," the overtures, &c., are surely rich attractions. And there will be besides the opportunity of listening for the first time to an American lady who has won much fame both in this country and in Europe by her vocal powers. *A special train will convey passengers out to Brookline after the concert.* . . . The MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB's concert last night, was too late for notice in this number. . . . The HARVARD MUSICAL ASSOCIATION hold their annual meeting at the Revere House on Monday evening. Members will please notice advertisement, which was accidentally omitted in our last.

About Old Books.

BERLIN, DEC. 3, 1858. This letter is all about old books—mostly queer old good-for-nothing things, but on the whole not unpleasant to see if you are fond of old specimens of printing.

One of the 'hobbies' of our country newspapers is an old book. Somebody happens to get sight of a Bible, or a Latin or Greek book, two centuries old, and a description of it goes into the next village newspaper, and this is copied far and wide—from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Now in general these are only cases of the discovery of mares' nests, with very large eggs. Still the feeling, which lies at the bottom of these articles is one with which I heartily sympathize. I have loved an old book from childhood, and remember now how I pored over the Life of Prince Eugene of Savoy, when but seven or eight years of age—not because I care for Eugene, and Malborough, and the Emperor, and all those old fellows, so much as because the book was more than a hundred years old! The idea is among our people that books of three to four centuries of age are very rare, and the old Thomas Aquinas (about 1470) in Harvard College Library is one of the most interesting books there to visitors in general. They have an idea also that such books are very costly—far beyond the means of private individuals—schools, town libraries, and the like. For my own part I believe that every library should have one or two really old books, even though not a person who uses the collection could read them. Such things beget an interest in old literature, they bring up a hundred subjects of inquiry—and give in some sort a standard of comparison by which to judge of literary antiquity. Suppose in the library of the Normal School at Framingham, or the town library at Natick, the Aquinas just mentioned was to be seen—it would soon become a familiar example of ancient printing to many, who have never seen anything of half its age and probably never will.

Now, in regard to the expense of obtaining copies of old works. Except in a few cases, which are not likely to occur to any of us mere antiquity does not give a book any high value; the great prices paid oftentimes for books, consisting only of some half a dozen leaves, depend upon other circumstances. Let me give some examples of books which have met my eye while examining catalogues of antiquarian booksellers for musical works. The first that I open to is a book for sale in this city. It consists of only 8 pages, small quarto, six or eight inches square perhaps. There is a copy of it in the College Library at Cambridge, and in one or two other American libraries. I think the Cambridge copy cost £20—about \$100. Why should this have such a value? Because it is the letter of Columbus, "*de Insulis nuper inventis*," (concerning the Islands lately discovered) printed in Latin in 1493—a few months only after the discovery. The price of the copy for sale here is \$75 of

our money. Now another bookseller here has one of Aquinas' works, a great folio volume of a thousand pages or more—it was printed before they numbered the pages—ten years older than the Columbus book—1453—a five-dollar bill would buy it, and more too.

On another catalogue I find a Dutch book—"Beschrijvinge van Virginia, Nicum Nederlandt, Nieuw Engelandt, &c." This has a map and pictures—printed in 1637,—and van der Douck's "Beschrijvinge van Neum Nederlandt" 2d edition 1656. For a perfect copy of the first, \$125 have been paid, and for the second \$100. These are perfect copies—what price if any is set to them I do not know. Now these books have a historical value, and are very rare—especially good handsome copies with the maps and pictures perfect.

On the other hand look at the following list:—Albertus Magnus, 'Opus de misterio missae'—a great folio, printed at Ulm 1473—within 25 years after the invention of printing—and nearly as many before the discovery of America by Columbus. Sold in England for over \$21. Albertus Magnus—*De landibus B. V. Mariae*—printed about 1470—another copy of the same printed at Nuremberg about 1472—both great folios.

Thomas Aquinas—*prima pars Secundae*—Mentz, P. Schriber—1471.—Note this! The inventors of Printing were Gutenberg, Faust and Schaeffer—and the first printing office was at Mentz—or Mayence. Here then is a book from the original printing office.

Bonaventura, *Speculum B. V. Mariae*, another folio, 1470. Bronnerde, *Opus trivium*, &c., &c., an old Latin civil law book, I guess, of nearly 600 pages, printed at Cologne before 1470. Carcano, 'Sermones,' &c., a quarto volume about as thick as the last, printed at Venice about 1472.

Cassiodorus,—*Historical tripartite ex Socrate*, &c., &c., an old Latin translation in XII books—first edition 1472.

Duns Scotus, 'Opus Anglicum,' 1474; Eusebius Pamphilus, Venice, 1473; Gallen, 1475; *Gesta Romanorum*, German translation, 1489; Saint Gregor, *Dialogorum*, 4 books, about 1472; Petrarca Fr. 'De Contemptu mundi,' about 1572, and "De remediis utriusque fortunae", same date.

I name these few books as specimens only. Not one of them is priced at more than \$15 American money most at less than \$5. What makes such books sell at such high prices in America is the difficulty of collecting them and getting them across the ocean on the one hand, and the ignorance of the purchaser of their real value. Some of the books in this list are five hundred miles away—probably most of them are sold by this time. If not, and I wished to get them, I must apply to some Antiquarian bookseller, who is known to those in other cities, give him the money, to send, with his order, for the book. If the book is there it is forwarded—in process of time. Germans do not hurry matters. If not, in the lapse of ages my money comes back again. So here are postages and package express charges to be paid. Now it will never pay to send a single volume—a great thick folio, to America. If, however, thirty or forty such are ordered, then by sending them in one large box, the expense divided among the purchasers is not much.

When I came home in 1856, I had had a long discussion with myself whether to bring some twenty bibles of which I had a list, no one of which was under three hundred years old—some in Latin, some in German, some in both, some with pictures and some without—and which, when in Boston, would have cost me, (original prices, collecting, packing, freight, duties, &c.) on an average about \$5 each—some half that, others twice that. I presume a hundred persons said to me afterwards: "Why didn't you bring them? I would gladly give ten dollars for such a bible!"

Why I did not bring them is easily answered. To go into such a speculation requires time, capital, risk and labor, which I have not—had not then—at command.

Certain works bearing upon the history of Calvinistic psalmody have been objects of pursuit to me for five years. In searching catalogues from all parts of central Europe in the hope of at length coming upon them, (they are books which I have sought in vain for in the great libraries of Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Halle, Goettingen, Hanover, Wolfenbüttel!) I find continually such old works as in the list above, and know how gladly many a friend at home would give space in his library to one or two of them as curiosities. The difficulty is to get them. The trouble lies not in the original cost of the books, but the heavy tolls taken by every bookseller, carrier and agent, through whose hand they pass.

Now noted some fifty volumes—mostly huge great folios—a small wheelbarrow load each—all printed before the discovery of America by Columbus, within a half century of the invention of printing; of these, probably half are still to be obtained, at prices which would bear all the expenses of getting them to America, and then not come to more than from \$5 to \$10 each—perhaps less. But this could only be, in case a good box full could be sent at once.

It is curious how the Jew antiquarians of Germany feel at once the increased demand for any particular class of books. In 1851, I could buy pamphlets—the original editions of sermons and tracts by Luther, printed from 1517 to 1547, for 17 to 37 cents of our money. Some three or four Americans, seeing mine began to buy. When four years later I wished to buy some more, the prices had more than doubled, and I thought myself fortunate the other day in getting the old German copy (1522) of Martin Luther's reply to "König Heinrichs von Engelland buch," Henry VIII's book, which gained him and Queen Victoria too, for that matter, the title of "defender of the faith,"—together with the tract, published immediately after Luther's death in 1546, containing a minute account of his last hours—fortunate, I say, in getting these two tracts for many times what they would have cost me a few years ago.

Speaking of Luther tracts—among those I brought home in 1856, was one—the only copy I ever saw, and which \$10 would hardly have bought of me—printed immediately after Luther's departure from the famous Diet at Worms—containing an account of all that he did during his last forty-eight hours in Worms, and printed as an antidote to the falsehoods spread abroad by the other party. The friend who borrowed that, is requested to return it to the editor of the Journal of Music for me.

Thus far there has been no great call for books which are merely curious to us as antiquities, and it would be easy for me to fill out orders sent through Mr. Dwight to the number of at least forty or fifty volumes. I should be glad to do this. Old Bibles have become much rarer than they were four years ago, and the prices of them, especially those containing wood cuts, have risen in a pretty large ratio. In one of the catalogues, however, is a very rare Psalter, Latin and German, printed at Basle, by M. Furter, in 1503—a small quarto, with manuscript notes on the margin—for three or four dollars. Is this in the fine collection of Bibles on Dana Hill?

While looking over a catalogue yesterday which is very rich in ante-Columbus books, memory recalled the hundreds of delighted faces I have seen bending over the old Aquinas in the Cambridge library, and the tones of voice in which I have so often heard the words so slowly and wonderingly spoken—"1469! before the discovery of America by Columbus! Oh! how old!!" And it occurred to me to sit down and just talk the matter over a little with my friends—the readers of Dwight's Journal; and here, friends, you have the result. A. W. T.

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This is an authentic edition of this, at the present moment, fashionable set of Quadrilles. Persons desiring to procure a copy, should be careful to call for the *New Caledonians*, as there are several copies in circulation which have not the correct figures.

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Three more of a series of excellent arrangements of the principal beauties of this opera for two performers.

LUISA MILLER. Valse de Salon. C. D'Albert. 60

A good waltz of medium difficulty, embracing all the popular airs in this opera, which, during the last London season, with Mlle. Piccolomini in the principal role has rapidly grown a favorite with the English public.

Books.

THE NEW MUSICAL ALPHABET.—Containing one hundred Exercises in one position of the hands, for juvenile pianists, and intended to precede any book of instruction. By C. Chaulieu. 25

This is intended to prepare children from the age of four years for the study of the piano, and lay a sure foundation for their correctly acquiring the mechanism of playing. Mothers, even those who know but little of music, may, with this alphabet and the musical catechism, fit their children to take lessons from a master without loss of time.

